

# West Nile virus is here, what can be done about it?

**LT. COL., DR.,  
JOE SCHURHAMMER**

Public Health Flight

*"SANTA FE—A Valencia County woman is the first human case of West Nile virus identified in New Mexico. The woman had not traveled outside of New Mexico so was bitten by infected mosquitoes in the state. Testing was done by a private laboratory and the results reported to the New Mexico Department of Health. The woman was seen by her physician with symptoms of fever, headache and a rash. She did not develop the more severe meningitis or encephalitis, which can be fatal."* New Mexico Department of Health News Release, July 30

## What is West Nile virus?

West Nile virus is a potentially serious illness. Experts believe West Nile virus is established as a seasonal epidemic in North America that flares up in the summer and continues into the fall. This fact sheet contains important information that can help you recognize and prevent West Nile virus.

## What are the symptoms of West Nile virus?

West Nile virus affects the central nervous system. Symptoms vary.

★ **No symptoms in most people.** Approximately 80 percent of people who are infected with West Nile virus will not show any symptoms at all.

★ **Mild symptoms in some people.** Up to 20 percent of the people who become infected will display mild symptoms, including fever, headache and body aches, nausea, vomiting and sometimes swollen lymph glands or a skin rash on the chest, stomach and back. Symptoms typically last a few days.

★ **Serious symptoms in a few people.** About one in 150 people infected with West Nile virus will develop severe illness. The severe symptoms can include high fever, headache, neck stiffness, stupor, disorientation, coma, tremors, convulsions, muscle weakness, vision loss, numbness and paralysis. These symptoms may last several weeks, and neurological effects may be permanent.

## How does it spread?

★ **Infected mosquitoes.** Generally, West Nile virus is spread by the bite of

an infected mosquito. Mosquitoes are West Nile virus carriers that become infected when they feed on infected birds. Crows and jays are highly susceptible to West Nile virus and are indicators of potential human exposure. Infected mosquitoes can then spread West Nile virus to humans and other animals when they bite.

★ **Transfusions, transplants and mother-to-child.** In a very small number of cases, West Nile virus also has spread through blood transfusions, organ transplants, breastfeeding and even during pregnancy from mother to baby.

★ **Not through touching.** West Nile virus is not spread through casual contact such as touching or kissing a person with the virus.

## How soon do infected people get sick?

People typically develop symptoms 3-14 days after the infected mosquito bites them.

## How is West Nile virus infection treated?

There is no specific treatment for West Nile virus infection. In cases with mild symptoms, people experience symptoms such as fever and aches that pass on their own. In more severe cases, people usually need to go to the hospital where they can receive supportive treatment including intravenous fluids, help with breathing and nursing care.

## What should I do if I think I have West Nile virus?

Mild West Nile virus illness improves on its own, and people do not necessarily need to seek medical attention for this infection. If you develop symptoms of severe West Nile virus illness, such as unusually severe headaches or confusion, seek medical attention immediately. Severe West Nile virus illness usually requires hospitalization. Pregnant women and nursing mothers are encouraged to talk to their doctor if they develop symptoms that could be West Nile virus.

## What is the risk of catching West Nile virus?

For most, risk is low. Less than 1 percent of people who are bitten by

mosquitoes develop any symptoms of the disease and relatively few mosquitoes actually carry West Nile virus.

Risk is greater for those outdoors a lot. People who spend a lot of time outdoors are more likely to be bitten by an infected mosquito. They should take special care to avoid mosquito bites.

People over 50 can get sicker and are more like to develop serious symptoms of West Nile virus if they do get sick. They should take special care to avoid mosquito bites.

Risk through medical procedures is low. The risk of getting West Nile virus through blood transfusions and organ transplants is very small, and should not prevent people who need surgery from having it. If you have concerns, talk to your doctor before surgery.

Pregnancy and nursing do not increase risk of becoming infected with West Nile virus.

## What can I do to prevent West Nile virus?

The easiest and best way to avoid West Nile virus is to prevent mosquito bites.

★ When you are outdoors, use insect repellents containing DEET (N, N-diethyl-meta-toluamide). Follow the directions on the package.

★ Many mosquitoes are most active at dusk and dawn. Consider staying indoors during these times or use insect repellent and wear long sleeves and pants. Light-colored clothing can help you see mosquitoes that land on you.

★ Make sure you have good screens on your windows and doors to keep mosquitoes out.

★ Get rid of mosquito breeding sites by emptying standing water from flowerpots, buckets and barrels. Change the water in pet dishes and replace the water in birdbaths weekly. Drill drainage holes in tire swings so water drains out. Keep children's wading pools empty and on their sides when they aren't being used.

## What are Albuquerque and the 377th Medical Group Public Health Office doing about West Nile virus?

The 377th Medical Group Public Health Office is working with

Albuquerque's Environmental Health Department, the Centers for Disease Control and other government agencies to prepare for and prevent new cases of West Nile virus.

## Some things the 377th Medical Group is doing include:

★ Conducting joint West Nile virus surveillance, data sharing, and control measures with City of Albuquerque

★ Creating new education tools and programs for the media, the public and health professionals

## What else should I know?

**Horses:** Can be dead end hosts for the virus...roughly one in three affected animals die or are euthanized. Vaccines are available to protect your horse and vaccination is required for all horses stabled on Kirtland AFB. See your veterinarian.

**Dogs and Cats:** While dogs and cats can become infected, evidence of clinical disease is uncommon. Only cats have been shown capable of transmitting the virus to a mosquito that can in turn transmit the virus to people or other pets. There are no approved vaccines available for dogs or cats, however an effective repellent is available for dogs through your veterinarian.

**If you find a dead bird:** Don't handle birds with your bare hands. Reporting of dead birds is not necessary and individuals with gloved hands or a shovel may remove them. If there are any questions, you can contact Public Health or the Albuquerque health department.

## For more information:

★ call the Centers for Disease Control public response hotline at 888-246-2675 (English), 888-246-2857 (Español), or 866-874-2646 (TTY);

★ call the 377th Medical Group Public Health Office, 505-846-3461;

★ go to the Albuquerque Environmental Health Web site [www.cabq.gov/envhealth/index.html](http://www.cabq.gov/envhealth/index.html);

★ or call the Kirtland AFB Veterinary Clinic, 846-4280 or 846-4276.

# Internet café users beware!

Someone could be recording every keystroke, gaining access to even your protected accounts

**BY SPECIAL AGENT SCOTT D. DAUGHTRY**  
Air Force Office of Special Investigations

The 21st century has become the information-age era; from accessing business e-mail accounts via Web-mail to online banking, nobody can afford to do without Internet connectivity.

This consumer trend has spawned an entire industry; businesses use Internet connectivity to gain your business. Some examples include airports (Internet kiosks), hotels (computers in the main lobby to check e-mail), public libraries and Internet Café's.

This online connectivity is especially useful to military personnel and their families when they are in temporary duty or permanent change of station mode.

However, there are dangers inherent with Internet connectivity in public areas, as New York residents recently learned. A computer hacker installed keystroke-logging software at various Kinko outlets that recorded every keyboard keystroke to a hidden file.

This enabled the hacker to accumulate over 450 user accounts, passwords and online account numbers over a one-year period. The hacker was discovered when he used a remote-access program to dial

into a Kinko store to retrieve the hacked information.

Unfortunately, the Kinko story is not an isolated incident; a number of hackers have been discovered using similar methods to steal information from public computer systems. A college hacker recently used this technique on 100 campus computer systems—the information was used to create campus identification cards for making purchases and gain illegal entrance to campus buildings.

Keystroke capturing software is nothing new; it has been sold in commercial stores as a means for parents to monitor their children's online activities.

Computer vendors now market a device that is inserted between the keyboard and the computer that can store up to 64 thousand keystrokes, with no software installation required. This device is even sold in the catalogs that you read on an airplane.

As dire as this situation sounds, there are precautions you can take to protect yourself:

★ Visually inspect the keyboard port on the rear of the computer. The keyboard cable should plug directly into the computer case, with no devices in-between.

★ Internet software should be configured to

flush Internet cookies and Web addresses; both can store sensitive information that can be retrieved and illegally used.

★ When typing in sensitive information, use the Windows cutting and pasting feature from another document (such as a Notepad document) to form the username and password for secure Web sites.

★ Make sure you log out of the operating system to prevent another person from accessing your information.

★ Ask the Internet café owner (or business manager) what computer security measures they have in-place to protect users. If they don't know, or don't have anything in place, consider going elsewhere.

If you suspect that using a public computer system has compromised your information, immediately contact your financial institution. They have procedures in-place to detect fraudulent activity; this will also place a financial cap on charges made against your account that you will be liable for.

Inform the business manager so reparative action can be taken to protect their clientele.

Finally, without delay, change your online passwords to prevent further siphoning from your accounts.

## Sept. 19 honors our prisoners of war, missing in action

**BY CAPT. KIMBERLY B. ADAMSKI**  
377th Air Base Wing  
Military Equal Opportunity

Established by presidential proclamation, National Prisoner of War and Missing in Action Recognition Day honors all Americans who are former prisoners of war and servicemembers and civilians still unaccounted for and their families, all who have made extraordinary sacrifices on behalf of their country.

This year National POW/MIA Recognition Day falls on Sept. 19, and TEAM KIRTLAND is joining Albuquerque to host a ceremony to show our everlasting concern for those still missing at 11 a.m. in the New Mexico Veterans Memorial Park.

Jerry D. Jennings, deputy assistant secretary of

Defense for POW/Missing Personnel Affairs, aptly stated, "More than 140,000 Americans since World War I have endured the hardships of captivity as prisoners of war ... Their sacrifices—for freedom—must never be forgotten. This nation especially honors their names, their undying spirit and their memory on Sept. 19, 2003."

The POW/MIA flag flies high as a constant reminder of those still missing and of their families who have waited decades for answers. Other than "Old Glory," the POW/MIA flag is the only flag ever to fly over the White House, having been displayed in this place of honor on National POW/MIA Recognition Day since 1982.


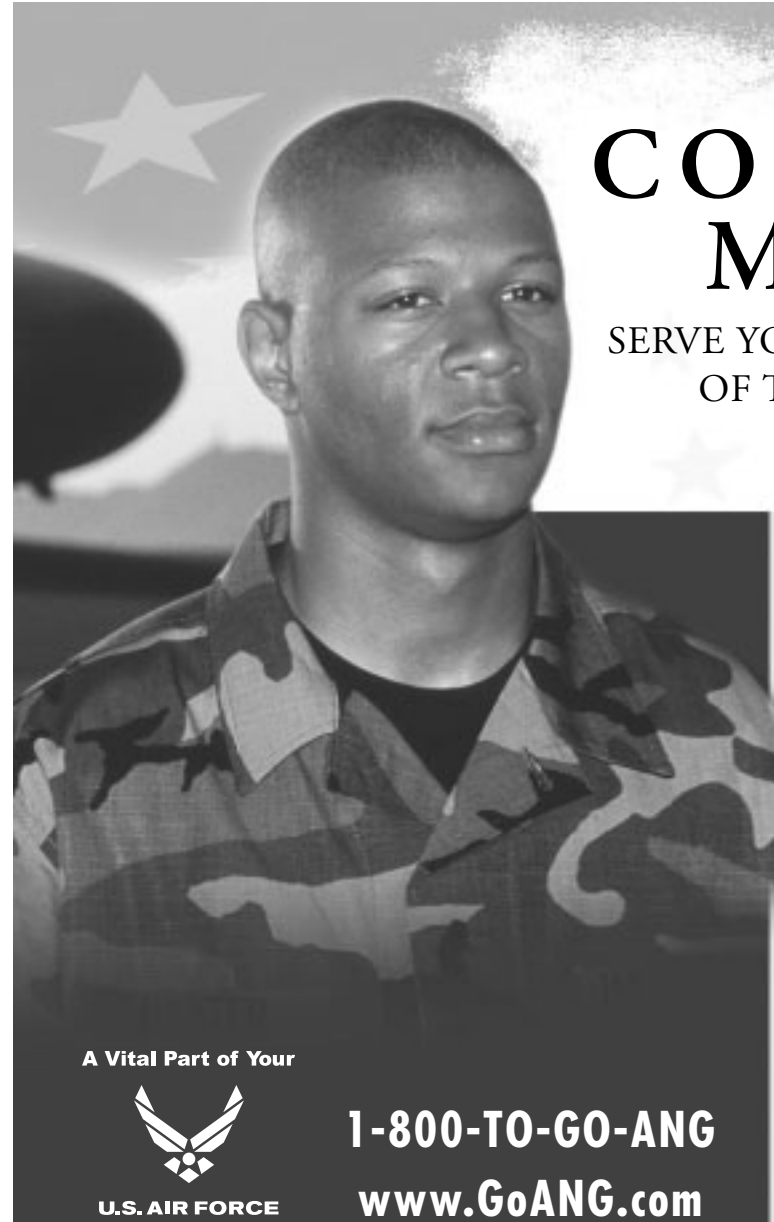
Log onto the Defense POW/Missing Personnel Office Web site at [www.dtic.mil/dpmo](http://www.dtic.mil/dpmo) to learn more

about our American POWs and MIAs. In addition, please visit the New Mexico Veterans Memorial located at 1100 Louisiana Boulevard Southeast, north of the Gibson Gate—you'll be glad you did.

The memorial park is neutral to both gender and ethnicity. It is timeless, not dwelling on a specific period or campaign, and is also intended to honor those yet to serve. The design speaks to all veterans' experiences, from the moment of their decision to serve to their return home.

Veterans share unique experiences and memories, and the memorial evokes those memories.

Mark your calendars now for Sept. 19 and plan on a well-spent hour honoring our American comrades who to this day remain unaccounted for.



## COMMUNITY MATTERS

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